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Question of Palestine

The situation in the Middle East

Consequences of the Iraqi occupation of and aggression against Kuwait

Sustainable development and international economic cooperation

Environment and sustainable development

Security Council
Fifty-seventh year

Letter dated 20 June 2002 from the Permanent Representative of Oman to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of the press communiqué adopted during the eighty-third session of the Ministerial Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council held in Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, on 8 June 2002, under the Chairmanship of H.E. Mr. Yousef Bin Alawi Bin Abdullah, Minister Responsible for Foreign Affairs of the Sultanate of Oman.

I should be grateful if you would have the text of the present letter and its annex circulated as an official document of the General Assembly under agenda items 41, 42, 54, 97 and 98, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Fuad Mubarak **Al-Hinai**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 20 June 2002 from the Permanent Representative of Oman to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Arabic]

Press communiqué issued by the Ministerial Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council at its eighty-third session, held in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, on 8 June 2002

The Ministerial Council of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) held its eighty-third session in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, under the chairmanship of His Excellency Mr. Yousef bin Alawi bin Abdullah, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Oman and the Chairman-in-Office of the Ministerial Council. The meeting was attended by:

His Excellency Mr. Rashid bin Abdullah al-Nuaimi, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the United Arab Emirates;

His Excellency Sheikh Mohammed bin Mubarak Al Khalifa, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bahrain;

His Royal Highness Prince Saud al-Faisal, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Saudi Arabia;

His Excellency Sheikh Hamad bin Jasim bin Jabr Al Thani, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Qatar; and

His Excellency Sheikh Muhammad Sabah al-Salem al-Sabah, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of Kuwait.

Abdulrahman bin Hamad al-Atiyyah, GCC Secretary-General, also participated in the meeting.

The Council conveyed its sincere congratulations and good wishes to His Royal Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Isa al-Khalifa, King of Bahrain, and to his loyal people, on the successful outcome of the parliamentary elections in the Kingdom.

The Council welcomed the agreement that had been reached between Qatar and the United Arab Emirates on diplomatic and consular cooperation between the two fraternal countries and affirmed that this auspicious step would strengthen the bonds of brotherhood and cooperation and would give an impetus to joint activities among the GCC States.

The Council went on to review recent developments in cooperation among the GCC States and developments in regional, inter-Arab and international political events.

I. Cooperation

In compliance with the decision of the Supreme Council at its fourth consultative meeting, the Ministerial Council studied practical ways and means of giving effect to the valuable ideas put forward at that meeting by His Royal Highness, Prince Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz, Deputy Custodian of the Two Holy

Mosques, designed to expedite economic integration among the GCC States and to give effect to the decisions taken by the Gulf Cooperation Council to establish the common market in the Gulf and to promote cooperation among the GCC States in the political, economic, social and military spheres.

The Council considered the outcome of the meetings of the ministerial committees concerned with economic affairs and reviewed the outcome of the fifty-sixth and fifty-seventh meetings of the Committee on Financial and Economic Cooperation concerning the implementation of the customs union of the GCC States early in 2003 and the follow up of the implementation of the time schedule of the currency union in preparation for the issuance of the unified currency of the GCC States by 2010. It also considered a report on new developments in economic relations between the GCC States and economic groupings, and on the conclusions of the Committee on Financial and Economic Cooperation at its most recent meeting concerning the promotion of economic relations between the GCC States and China. The Council approved the proposals of the Committee on Scientific and Technical Cooperation concerning support for private sector scientific research centres for the utilization and introduction of modern technology.

The Council was also informed of the outcome of a number of meetings related to man and the environment, chief among them being curriculum development issues, cooperation with the Red Crescent Societies in the GCC States and the results of the follow up of the question of establishing reception facilities for ballast water and garbage from ships and the accession of the GCC States to the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL). The Ministerial Council adopted appropriate decisions on those matters.

The Council considered a report on the progress of military cooperation, expressed its satisfaction and what had been achieved, looking forward to other achievements in that area, and was informed of the steps taken to implement the decision of the Supreme Council at its twenty-second session concerning media activity in the GCC States.

II. Political issues

The Ministerial Council studied the situation between Kuwait and Iraq in the light of the resolutions adopted by the Supreme Council at its previous sessions and the positive outcome of the Arab Summit Conference held in Beirut on 27 and 28 March 2002 which had contributed to the strengthening of regional security and cooperation.

The Council expressed its hope that what had been agreed on at the Conference would lead to concrete and practical steps conducive to the implementation of the relevant international resolutions, particularly with regard to Kuwaiti prisoners and detainees and the nationals of other States, the restitution of Kuwaiti property and the prevention of any repetition of the events of 1990.

The Ministerial Council recalled the resolutions of the Supreme Council concerning the three islands, the Greater Tunb, the Lesser Tunb and Abu Moussa, which belonged to the United Arab Emirates and reaffirmed its adherence to the consistent stand taken by the GCC States in support of the right of the United Arab Emirates to sovereignty over its three islands.

The Ministerial Council took note of the contacts that had taken place recently between the United Arab Emirates and the Islamic Republic of Iran, in particular the important visit to Iran by His Royal Highness Sheikh Hamdan bin Zayed al-Nahyan, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, and hoped that that visit, and the expected visit to the United Arab Emirates by His Excellency President Mohammad Khatami, would lead to positive steps conducive to strengthening the relations between the two neighbouring countries, and would strengthen the ties of friendship, deepen the existing cooperation between the GCC States and the Islamic Republic of Iran and place security and stability in the region on a sound footing.

The Ministerial Council reviewed the deterioration of the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories as a result of the ongoing brutal campaign by the Israeli forces which had entered a number of Palestinian towns and were continuing to kill civilians and to destroy houses. It condemned those acts of barbarism and emphasized that the continuation of violence was a disservice to the efforts to establish peace and prevented the Palestinian National Authority from carrying out its functions for the maintenance of security and stability.

The Ministerial Council also reviewed the inter-Arab and international efforts to end the violence in the Palestinian territories and bring about the Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories and the resumption of negotiations, and affirmed that a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the region was a strategic option and that the initiative of His Royal Highness Prince Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz, Deputy Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, which had been adopted by the Arab Summit Conference in Beirut in March 2002, formed a comprehensive basis for a peaceful settlement in the framework of international law and should be the basis of any future negotiations and of any serious initiative designed to achieve a just, comprehensive and lasting settlement in the region.

The Council expressed its grave concern at the increasing tension between Pakistan and India and the dangerous deterioration in the situation and, in view of the desire of the GCC States for the establishment of security and stability in both countries and in the region, called on the parties to exercise restraint, to halt the military escalation in order to safeguard the interests of the two neighbouring countries, to display wisdom and to resolve the differences between them through negotiations and by peaceful means on the basis of the principle of good-neighbourliness and common interest.

The Ministerial Council expressed its condolences to the people and Government of the fraternal Syrian Arab Republic and extended its sympathy to the families of those who had lost their lives as a result of the collapse of the Zayzoun Dam.